

Kentucky Teacher

Connie Brown
Paint Lick Elementary (Garrard County)
22 years in the classroom



November 2007

News for the Nation's Most Innovative Educators

www.education.ky.gov



Photo by Amy Wallot

Listening and learning

Noe Middle School teacher Robin Lindsay, bottom left, talks with Martha Nsengiyunva, Sadi Abdulkadir, Maka Hassan and Navid Paghmani, all students for whom English is a second language, to help them improve their English literacy skills. Noe Middle is one of four Kentucky schools that received the School to Watch designation for their focus on the high academic performance and healthy development of young adolescents. (See Pages 6 and 7 for information on this year's Schools to Watch in Kentucky.)

Fifty applicants want to be commissioner

By Matthew Tungate

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The Kentucky Board of Education will have more than 50 choices from which to select the next commissioner of education. Chairman Joe Brothers said at October's meeting that board members would be conducting "a number" of phone interviews, then asking prospective candidates to submit to financial- and criminal-

record checks.

Applicants also will have to write about how they fit the 12 criteria the board set for a successful commissioner. These criteria include successful leadership of a large organization, understanding of Kentucky's culture and institutions, demonstrable record of educational leadership and commitment to diversity and reducing achievement gaps.

Brothers said the board planned to meet in late October to develop a list of finalists "that will be released to the public for vetting." He said he plans for formal interviews Nov. 13.

In July, Illinois educator Barbara Erwin accepted and then declined the commissioner's position following questions in the media about her resume and superintendencies in previous school districts.

In other action, the board:

- agreed that the concordance table procedure for computing test scores from the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS) should be applied to the current accountability cycle. The procedure would be applied to accountability index scores for 2007 and 2008 only.

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2007 test results show schools moving toward proficiency

By Lisa Y. Gross

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Results from state assessments administered last spring show that Kentucky public schools are moving toward proficient levels. The accountability indices for all grade levels show increases in the 2007 administration of the Kentucky Core Content Test (KCCT).

KCCT is the primary component of the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS). Nonacademic data, which also is a component of the school and district accountability indices, were released last May. At the high school level, results of the PLAN assessment, administered in September 2006, are included as 5 percent of the accountability index.

Data also indicate that 77.5 percent, or 904, of Kentucky's 1,167 public schools made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in the 2006-07 school year under the requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act.

CATS reporting

More than 400,000 students in grades 3-12 participate in the annual CATS assessments. Students are tested in seven content areas: reading, mathematics, science, social studies, arts and humanities, practical living/vocational studies and writing. Schools are held accountable for their students' performance on the tests and for nonacademic factors, such as dropout, attendance and retention rates and transition to adult life.

Presentation of testing results for the 2006-07 school year was a little differ-

ent than in the past. Over the past year, a number of changes, many due to NCLB requirements, were made to the state's testing and accountability system:

- The KCCT was based on a revised "Core Content for Assessment 4.1."
- The KCCT used a new test design that included more multiple-choice and fewer open-response questions.
- Assessments in on-demand writing and practical living/vocational studies were moved to new grades.
- Assessments in reading and mathematics were added to accomplish annual testing of those content areas in grades 3-8 as required by NCLB.
- A new state law now requires Kentucky public school students to participate in the ACT and its companion assessments, PLAN and EXPLORE.
- The Alternate Assessment program was revised and includes three components: Portfolios, Attainment Tasks and Transition Attainment Record. Separate scores are reported for each content area.

These changes required Kentucky to examine the student performance standards that define the categories of novice, apprentice, proficient and distinguished for the KCCT and the Alternate Assessment program. Existing standards were validated or new standards were set for the new assessments.

Because of all these changes, the National Technical Advisory Panel on Assessment and Accountability (NTAPAA), which

See 2007 on Page 9

Opportunities to present or learn from others during 2008 KTLC

Do you ever wonder what teachers in the next district are doing in their classrooms? Are you curious about how schools in another part of Kentucky use technology in instruction or design classroom assessments? Would you like to hear from teacher

coaches and mentors about how they strengthen instruction in their schools?

Or do you have a program or strategy that's working in your school you would like to share with other teachers?

See OPPORTUNITIES on Page 10

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Bulletin Board



Photo by Amy Wallot

Eastern Kentucky University's Model Laboratory Elementary School (Madison County)

Bulletin Board is compiled by Rebecca Blessing
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Conferences

Exceptional Children

The 42nd Annual Exceptional Children's Conference will be held Nov. 18-20 in Louisville. More than 200 breakout sessions are being offered in addition to half-day workshops and six-hour training institutes.

www.kycec.com/news.htm

SETESOL 2007

The Southeastern Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (SETESOL) will hold its 2007 conference in Louisville Nov. 29-Dec. 1. The theme of the conference is "Building Bridges: Connecting the Learning Community."

www.kytesol.org/conferences.htm

Ending Assault and Violence

The ninth annual Ending Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Conference is scheduled Dec. 4-6 in Lexington.

<http://kyasap.brinkster.net/>

"Hats Off to Literacy"

The Kentucky Council of Teachers of English/Language Arts Conference is scheduled Feb. 1-2, 2008, in Lexington. The theme of the conference is "Hats Off to Literacy." Conference information and registration are available online.

<http://conference.kcte.org>

Reading and literacy

The 2008 National Reading Recovery and K-6 Classroom Literacy Conference will be held Feb. 9-12, 2008, in Columbus, Ohio. Conference sessions, hotel information and registration are available online.

www.readingrecovery.org

Events

Online learning research project

e-Learning Kentucky is looking for 60 or more 4th-, 5th-, 7th- and 8th-grade English/language arts and mathematics teachers to participate in a national research study evaluating the effectiveness of online professional development courses. Participants can earn a \$300 stipend and professional development or graduate credit for taking three online courses from spring 2008 through 2009. Additional information and registration are available online.

Contact: elarningkyinquiry@education.ky.gov or Bob Fortney, toll-free at (866) 432-0008, Ext. 4540, bob.fortney@education.ky.gov

www.bc.edu/efe

Recruiting for online programs

e-Learning Kentucky is recruiting participants for online professional development course facilitation and course design training that begins in late January 2008. Training stipends will be paid for 11 weeks of online training. Interested candidates can request an application or more information by e-mail at elarningkyinquiry@education.ky.gov.

Take a Veteran to School Day

Take a Veteran to School Day is designed to link veterans of all ages with young people in schools and to bring history to life in classrooms. A how-to guide, teacher resources and background on the Veterans Day holiday (observed on Nov. 12) are available online.

www.veterans.com

Geography Awareness Week

National Geography Awareness Week is Nov. 11-17. "Asia: Continent of Contrasts" is this year's theme. A Kentucky toolkit is available at the Kentucky Geographic Alliance Web site with activities and lesson plans for the week. For maps of Asia or world maps, contact Elizabeth Riggs, state coordinator for Geography Action! and Education, at elizabeth.riggs@bgreen.kyschools.us.

www.kga.org

"Alice in Wonderland"

One of the most famous novels of all time comes alive on stage as the Lexington Children's Theatre presents "Alice in Wonderland" Nov. 24-Dec. 3 at the Lexington Opera House. Rates and special performances are available for school groups.

www.lctonstage.org/plays07-08Alice.htm

TEAMS

Students in grades 9-12 are invited to participate in TEAMS (Tests of Engineering Aptitude, Mathematics and Science) Feb. 16, 2008, at the University of Kentucky. Schools may register multiple teams of four to eight students for this academic program and competition. Registration closes Jan. 15, 2008.

www.jets.org/teams

Resources

Three AP directors sought

The Kentucky Science and Technology Corp. (KSTC) is searching for three experienced directors to support a new initiative in Kentucky to help accelerate student achievement on Advanced Placement coursework and exams in mathematics, science and English. This effort is affiliated with the National Mathematics and Science Initiative.

Contact: Joanne Lang at KSTC, (859) 233-3502, jang@kstc.com

www.kstc.com/?677

Discount lodging at state parks

School employees and board members are eligible for reduced rates on lodge rooms and cottages at Kentucky state resort parks Nov. 4, 2007-March 31, 2008, subject to availability. Make reservations online and use the promo code "CC7" or call (800) 255-PARK and mention "Commonwealth Connection" for the special rate. Proof of employment required at check-in. Valid for leisure travel only.

www.parks.ky.gov

Tuskegee Airmen presentation

Bookings are being accepted for school presentations on the story of the Tuskegee Airmen, the first African-American U.S. military pilots. The focus is on Kentucky connections to the group. Small per-student fee applies.

Contact: Ron Spriggs, (859) 576-3636

<http://members.aol.com/rstaexhibit>

Literacy Without Limits

Produced in partnership with the Kentucky Department of Education's Early Literacy Branch, the Literacy Without Limits DVD-ROM showcases strategies that 4-12 content-area teachers can use to help students who struggle with literacy. It features 90-plus video clips shot in Kentucky classrooms. Schools have received a free copy, and DVD-ROMs are posted online.

www.literacywithoutlimits.org

Commissioner's Comments

Concordance tables keep accountability on course for proficiency and beyond

By Kevin Noland

Interim Commissioner of Education

Since July, you've received an abundance of data about how Kentucky public school students have performed on a variety of state, national and college-preparatory assessments: ACT results released this summer; Advanced Placement (AP) and SAT data in August; National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scores and Adequate Yearly Progress reports in September; and the October release of the 2007 Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS) data.

Overall, the news about achievement of our public school students is good. Students are making steady gains on the national tests, standardized college preparedness assessments and the Kentucky Core Content Test (KCCT).

Our public school students are at or near the national averages when compared to their peers throughout the country. Results from last spring's state assessment show that, in general, students are continuing to move toward proficient levels at all grade levels.

That's good news as the state goal of proficiency for all schools by 2014 gets closer. We are halfway through the 14-year CATS school improvement cycle!

Keeping CATS valid

As you are aware, there were changes to CATS during the past year. The Kentucky Core Content Test (KCCT) used a new test design and was based on the revised "Kentucky Core Content for Assessment 4.1." Weights given to the content-area tests were revised, and student performance standards were validated.

In addition, the number of grades involved in testing increased because of the annual assessments for grades 3-8 in reading and mathematics to comply with requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). On-demand writing and practical living/vocational studies assessments were moved to grades 4, 7 and 10.

Despite many changes to CATS, the Kentucky Board of Education and the Kentucky Department of Education have worked to make sure schools and districts continue to have valid, reliable data on which they can focus their instruction for years to come.

The state board knew that the changes made to the KCCT and the Alternate Assessment program, and the ensuing standards validation process, would affect assessment results. The board's goal was to keep accountability index targets for schools and districts in place and use the state-level trends in accountability indices that have remained stable over time.

With the help of the National Technical Advisory Panel on Assessment and Accountability, national testing experts who advise the state board, we've been able to use a statistical process to link old CATS (2000-06) and new CATS (2007). The testing experts proposed using a concordance approach that provides that link and allows Kentucky to directly compare data from two different KCCTs in different years.



Noland

This situation is similar to the change made several years ago when we moved from the Kentucky Instructional Results Information System (KIRIS), the state's assessment and accountability process (1993-98), to CATS. At that time, a different statistical link was used by Kentucky to keep accountability reliable and valid and to move from one system to another.

The state board has approved using the concordance model for the 2006-07 and 2007-08 testing cycle only. The accountability index for those two years will be linked to the original goals, established in 2000, that schools are expected to meet every two years. This allows accountability to continue moving forward.

The concordance link is made at the accountability index level only. For 2007-08, the school baseline, which was drawn at the end of the 1998-2000 accountability cycle, has not changed. The growth lines on each school's Growth Chart have not been redrawn.

The concordance tables remove the need to set new baselines and goals. The tables maintain state-level trends in accountability indices.

It's also important to understand that using the concordance tables will not affect Kentucky's reporting to the federal government for NCLB purposes. The annual measurable objectives and Adequate Yearly Progress targets related to NCLB will remain the same.

When we released school data in October, we provided each school with content-area scores, overall nonacademic indices and individual student scores that had not been adjusted. However, instead of one accountability index, schools received nonadjusted and adjusted accountability scores.

The adjusted accountability index links the performance of schools/districts on the spring 2007 assessments to the past system. The school score is related to the performance trends, the original goal and assistance lines in the school or district growth chart.

The adjusted accountability index is reported on the "Growth Chart" page of each school and district's "2006-07 Kentucky Performance Report."

The nonadjusted accountability index and content-area indices provide the connection to the absolute goal of proficiency (100 on a 140-point scale) by 2014. The nonadjusted data are calculated using the CATS new content area weights and new cut scores for student performance (novice, apprentice,

proficient and distinguished).

The nonadjusted accountability index is reported on the "Accountability Trends" page of each school and district's "2006-07 Kentucky Performance Report." Because of the changes to CATS, content-area results are presented in the report for the spring 2007 assessments only; results from previous years are not included.

For instructional purposes, educators should focus on the nonadjusted content area scores and the distance to the goal of 100. This allows a look at the needs of students in the school.

If you'd like more information about the concordance, there is a PowerPoint presentation available online at www.education.ky.gov/JumpTo/?jump=CATSConcordance.

What we know

As I mentioned before, the results from the spring 2007 assessment show continued progress in schools at all accountability index levels. Using the adjusted accountability index, elementary schools overall gained three points for an accountability index of 87.7, middle schools increased two-points to 79.0 and high schools, at 78.7, gained 2.8 points.

While there were gains, some schools are lagging far behind the top-performing schools. Students still struggle in certain content areas in the middle and high schools.

The challenge for Kentucky classroom teachers and school administrators is to build on progress and to find ways to improve the deficiencies, like writing and mathematics at the middle school level and science, social studies, mathematics and writing (total, on-demand and portfolio) at the high school level.

Schools also need to continue reducing the number of novice learners at each level. Elementary schools have the lowest percentage of novice learners in total writing (4.27 percent). Reading is the content area with the lowest percentage of novice learners in middle school (5.83 percent) and high school (5.01 percent).

Where must we go?

We are halfway in this journey to proficiency. The only way to move is forward – to proficiency and beyond. Proficiency and beyond is what Kentucky wants for our public schools. Proficiency and beyond is the goal for each and every one of our students.

We have valid and reliable data to support our work as we go forward preparing Kentucky public school students for their future studies and careers. We can make it happen!

(If you have a comment for Interim Commissioner Kevin Noland about this topic, contact him at kevin.noland@education.ky.gov.)



Photo by Amy Wallot

Focused on mastering skills

While Josh Shockley, a teacher at Paint Lick Elementary (Garrard County), spends each day in his classroom making a difference in student learning, he also makes time to help student Dallas Nicely with his shoelaces. The successes and challenges teachers face and the many roles educators play in public schools – teaching class, being a hall monitor, sharing bus duty, drying tears, mentoring a student, tightening loose shoelaces – will be recognized in school buildings throughout the state and nation Nov. 11-17 during American Education Week. The theme for the week is "Great Public Schools: A Basic Right and Our Responsibility."

IB program brings rigor, relevance and world perspective to Kentucky schools

By Rebecca Blessing

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Several Kentucky schools are among an increasing number of schools throughout the nation that offer the International Baccalaureate program. The IB program has a world-renowned reputation as one of the most-challenging education programs offered today in schools around the world.

"We decided to pursue the IB program for three reasons," said Bates Creek High School (Fayette County) IB Coordinator Teri Harper, "to raise the academic bar for all students, to raise the rigor and relevance for all students and to reduce the achievement gap for all students."

Bates Creek High is the fourth public school designated an IB World School in Kentucky. (Sacred Heart Academy, a private school in Jefferson County, also is designated an IB World School.) Bates Creek Middle School is hoping to offer the IB middle years program starting in the 2009-10 school year.

IB programs in more Kentucky schools may be on the horizon. Others are looking at the program as one way to better prepare students for postsecondary studies. Any school wanting to offer IB must successfully complete a stringent application process and a site visit from an IB committee.

What is IB?

IB is a full academic program encompassing an internationally standardized curriculum and rigorous internal and external assessments. The IB program typically operates alongside a school's regular academic program.

"IB students participate in an interdisciplinary approach to education that emphasizes analytical thinking skills along with increased knowledge," said Tom Gregory, biology teacher at Atherton High School (Jefferson County). "This prepares them not only for postsecondary education but success in life."

IB offers three levels of pro-

grams (primary years, middle years and diploma) for students ages 3-19. The programs can be offered individually or as a continuum.

The diploma program, the only IB program offered in Kentucky, starts the junior year in high school. In preparation, many IB schools offer a pre-diploma course of study for underclassmen.

IB diploma curriculum

The IB diploma program is based on a two-year liberal arts curriculum. Students select classes from each of the six subject groups: native language, world language, individuals and societies, experimental sciences, mathematics, and computer sciences and the arts. Typically half the courses are studied at a higher level (representing 240 teaching hours). The remaining courses are at a standard level (representing 150 teaching hours). All classes include an end-of-course exam.

The depth of knowledge is extensive, said Richard Guetig, assistant principal and IB coordinator at Atherton High.

"These courses are about depth rather than breadth. They are about integration of study, not isolation of study," added Harper, the Bates Creek High IB coordinator.

In addition to the required subject coursework, students must complete a theory of knowledge class, a 4,000-word essay and a CAS (creativity, action and service) component that involves 150 hours of participation in the arts, sports and community service.

To earn an IB diploma, students must meet all the above requirements and score a minimum 24 out of 45 possible points on the end-of-course assessments.

Kentucky schools vary in their requirements for admission to the IB diploma program. Some require a certain grade-point average, teacher recommendations and pre-requisite courses; others look more at a student's work ethic.

IB World Schools in Kentucky

Listed below are the five schools in Kentucky that have been designated IB World Schools in Kentucky, how long they have been involved in the program and contact information:

- **Atherton High School** (Jefferson County), since January 1987
Richard Guetig, (502) 485-8202, richard.guetig@jefferson.kyschools.us
- **Apollo High School** (Daviness County), since January 2003
Rachel Rosales, (270) 852-7100, rachel.rosales@daviess.kyschools.us
- **Holmes High School** (Covington Independent), since June 1983
William Grein, (859) 392-1042, bill.grein@covington.kyschools.us
- **Sacred Heart Academy**, private, since January 1998
Carol Sherman, (502) 897-6097, csherman@sacredheartacad.com
- **Bates Creek High School** (Fayette County), since April 2007
Teri Harper, (859) 381-3623, teri.harper@fayette.kyschools.us



Bates Creek High School juniors Drew Charron, left, Ulalo Chirwa, Scott Buckner, Annemarie Bobel and Ellie Steder work together on a project about Afghanistan's culture after reading the best-selling novel "The Kite Runner" for an English class that is part of the school's International Baccalaureate Diploma program.

"You don't have to be Albert Einstein in everything," said Harper, "but you do have to be motivated to work hard and do the program of studies."

Assessments

IB classes require students to complete internal as well as external assessments. Internal assessments can include oral presentations, projects, written papers, practical laboratory work, mathematical investigations and artistic performances. The course teacher grades them, and the IB organization audits samples of the scored student work to ensure fairness of grading throughout the program.

According to Rachel Rosales, IB coordinator at Apollo High School (Daviness County), "All teachers in the program are moderated so that all students participating in the program are held to the same standards, regardless of the country in which they are participating."

External assessments are typically uniform throughout the program, scored at IB scoring centers against set student performance standards. "The students who participate in the United States are preparing and taking the same exams as a student sitting in China, France and any other nation in the world," said Rosales.

Teacher training

All IB diploma program teachers must be trained and

sanctioned by the International Baccalaureate Organization. The training focuses primarily upon content, assessment and instructional strategies.

"The IB training was great. I learned about the program and how science is taught within it," said Kevin Crosby, a science teacher at Bates Creek High.

As an example, he cited an activity he used in his class on how the ocean gets salty. "I could have given notes over the subject in 10 minutes. Instead, we took 90 minutes to discover the answer to the question through data analysis. I didn't tell the students what data they needed; they had to figure it out for themselves. They had to think," he said.

"IB has pushed me to depend more on self-learning to complete my tasks" said Ryan Chan, a junior IB student at Bates Creek. "I am not given a novel to read and to answer pointless, general questions. I am given a novel to analyze and to create questions for open discussion where the class as a whole can contribute, thus allowing each and every individual to receive a unique perspective, which no teacher could ever teach."

Benefits

"The International Baccalaureate Diploma Program has been a challenging but entirely stimulating experience for me," said Mark Reeves, senior IB student and full diploma candidate at Atherton High School. "It has given me a

general theory of knowledge with which to study, analyze and experience a fulfilling understanding of the world."

IB helps prepare students for postsecondary study. They may earn college credit for the coursework they complete as part of the IB program in high school. "Our IB graduates are not surprised by the amount of study and work required at the college level," Rosales said of her Apollo High students.

Most Kentucky IB schools have only a small percentage of their student body enrolled in the full diploma program. However, proponents are quick to point out the benefits for other students: many of them decide to enroll in IB courses, others benefit from a teacher's IB training.

"Our goal is to train as many, if not all, of our teachers in the 'IB Way,'" said Harper, the Bates Creek High IB coordinator.

"We want all students to be exposed to the instructional strategies, materials, assessments and content so they too can become better students," Harper added. "We want them to receive the higher-order and critical-thinking skills that are so necessary to go to the next level."

MORE INFO ...

www.ibo.org

Larry Murphy, Kentucky Department of Education, (502) 564-4772, larry.murphy@education.ky.gov

Photo by Amy Wallot

Teachers are getting ready for 2009 Lincoln bicentennial

Kentucky teachers will have help with content lessons, field trips and classroom projects that focus on the 200th birthday of the nation's 16th president, Abraham Lincoln.

A grant from the Kentucky Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission has made possible the Lincoln Bicentennial Teacher Network, a partnership of the Kentucky Department of Education and Georgetown College in conjunction with the Underground Railroad Research Institute.

Twenty social studies teachers from public school districts throughout Kentucky have begun meeting as the Lincoln Bicentennial Teacher Network to develop lesson/unit plans in conjunction with the bicentennial celebration. Kentucky plans to kick off the bicentennial celebration in 2008 at Abraham Lincoln's Birthplace National Historic Site in Hodgenville (LaRue County). The national celebration will be Feb. 12, 2009, in Washington, D.C.

Lincoln was born on that date in 1809 on a farmstead in what is now LaRue County. He lived in Kentucky until he was about 7 years old. He also lived in Indi-

ana and Illinois before being elected to Congress and becoming president.

The Lincoln Bicentennial Teacher Network's work on the lesson/unit plans has been going on for several months. Participants gathered at Georgetown College in July for three days to hear content speakers and to collaborate on the final essential questions for

the lessons/units. Warren Greer, program coordinator of the Kentucky Lincoln Bicentennial Commission, told network participants about the goals of the commission and the many state and national activities that will be held in conjunction with the bicentennial celebration that teachers can use in the classroom.

"Students across the commonwealth can be proud that Abraham Lincoln was a Kentuckian," said Greer. "By taking field trips to Lincoln-related sites, students can explore a multitude of subjects, including civics, government, the Civil War and civil rights."

Participants also heard from Tom Mackie, director of the Abraham Lincoln Library and Museum at Lincoln Memorial University in Tennessee; Stephen Brown, education specialist at the Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historic Site; and Alicestyne Adams, director of the Underground Railroad Research Institute at Georgetown College.



Fourth-grade teacher Miranda Duncan, who is a member of the Lincoln Bicentennial Teacher Network, talks with a student in her Central Elementary (Johnson County) classroom.

Photos by Amy Wallot

At its September meeting, the Teacher Network heard from state historian and author James Klotter about Lincoln's Kentucky connection and the impact Lincoln had on Kentucky. Nancy Baird, professor at Western Kentucky University's Kentucky Library and Museum, talked with the group about using primary sources in the classroom.

During upcoming meetings, the network participants will work toward creating lessons and units on Lincoln-related content that will be available to teachers online at the beginning of the 2008-09 school year. In addition to the face-to-face meetings, the network also has created an online community through Blackboard to further communicate ideas so the lesson/unit plans are ready for implementation in classrooms next school year.

Teachers in K-12 public and private schools can apply for Lincoln Heritage Education grants. Minigrants up to \$350 are available to help fund field trips this spring and next fall to Abraham Lincoln sites, and Project Grants up to \$500 are available for Lin-



Tonya Carpenter is a member of the Lincoln Bicentennial Teacher Network and a teacher at Central Elementary (Johnson County).

coln-related classroom projects next school year. Cash matches are not required for either grant.

MORE INFO ...

Grant information - http://history.ky.gov/pdf/Education/Lincoln_Heritage_Ed_App_2007-2008.pdf

New program helps schools become green and healthy

By Maria Zoretic

Coordinator of Kentucky Green and Healthy Schools

Kentucky teachers have a new interactive resource for teaching students about their environment.

Kentucky Green and Healthy Schools (KGHS) is a Web-based program that allows students and staff to make their schools greener and healthier by studying their local and school environments.

By answering a series of standards-aligned questions called inventories, students and staff assess nine aspects of their school's environment: energy, water, solid waste, indoor air quality, green spaces, transportation, instructional leadership, hazardous chemicals, and health and safety. Once students complete an inventory, they review it to identify potential areas for improvement.

Students determine how to address these areas with an improvement project and then implement that project. Their actions are based on research that is highly relevant to their lives and their learning.

Since all inventory questions are standards-aligned, students are learning core content as they provide potential health and economic benefits for their schools.

Within the last 18 years, research has found a signifi-

cant correlation between the condition of school buildings and student health and academic performance. One area of particular concern is poor indoor air quality, which leads to high student and teacher absenteeism.

Since teachers and students

spend a large portion of each school day inside classrooms and on school grounds, the quality of these learning environments is crucial to student and teacher health. Through the KGHS program, students and teachers can assess and identify strategies to

improve the indoor air quality of their schools.

Another concern of school administrators is energy costs. In the KGHS program, students conduct an energy audit of their schools and identify inexpensive corrective or preventive measures

that can save thousands of dollars in operating costs. This provides students with a unique educational experience and a greater sense of ownership in their schools.

The KGHS program also is relevant to those districts renovating or building new schools. The Kentucky Green and Healthy Design Manual outlines design and construction criteria to help districts build healthier schools that operate at top efficiency.

Schools participating in this program are provided with support and recognition. The Kentucky Environmental Education Council provides in-school training and links to additional curriculum resources. Each school also is assigned a business partner and a natural resource partner to assist with more-technical aspects of the program.

In addition, the first 20 schools to register for the program will receive a stipend to help fund improvement projects. All participating schools will receive local and statewide recognition at a May ceremony in Frankfort.

Additional information about the program, design manual and registration is available online.

MORE INFO ...

www.greenschools.ky.gov

Contact: toll free (800) 882-5271, greenschools@ky.gov



Photo by Amy Wallot

Freshmen Liza Krein and Kaylin Burchell collect recyclable materials at Eastern Kentucky University's Model Laboratory School (Madison County) as part of a month-long recycling contest for elementary, middle and high school classrooms. As part of the Kentucky Green and Healthy Schools (KGHS) program, students in Susan Newmann's high school environmental science class are working on an energy audit of the building and an outdoor classroom.



Photo by Tim Thornberry, Education Cabinet

Jay Jones, who taught at Adairville School last school year, gets responses from students to his question about a mathematics problem.



Photo by Tim Thornberry, Education Cabinet

Boyd County Middle students Mariah Humphrey, right, and Lacey Jane Gehringer practice with the school band. Band classes for 6th-, 7th- and 8th-graders are part of the school's related arts program.



In Noe Middle School, students work with a moveable partition.

Four chosen 2007 Scho

The National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform, an alliance of more than 60 national associations and organizations, created a vision and criteria for high-performing middle-grades schools in 1997. Schools that meet those criteria are designated Schools to Watch.

Fifteen schools applied to be selected as a 2007 School to Watch in Kentucky, according to Fran Salyers, director of Eastern Kentucky University's Center for Middle School Academic Achievement and a representative for the state version of the National Forum. Schools had to perform a self-study and complete a lengthy application, she said.

A 40-person review committee of former Kentucky teachers, administrators, parents and professional educators reviewed the applications. Schools are judged on four criteria: academic excellence, developmental responsiveness, social equity and organizational support. Eleven schools received a site visit, and four – Adairville School (Logan County), Boyd County Middle, Noe Middle (Jefferson County) and North Oldham Middle – received recognition as 2007 Schools to Watch in Kentucky.

Adairville School: Small school gets big results

Adairville School (Logan County) is the only school in Kentucky to be named a School to Watch twice. It won the first award in 2003, but no one in the district was surprised at the recognition in 2007.

Language arts teacher Lori Bouldin said she was excited the school was redesignated as a School to Watch. "Every year we really consider ourselves to be lifelong learners and we are never satisfied with just good test scores," she said. The adjusted accountability index for Adairville School on the 2007 state assessment is 91.6.

Associate Superintendent Janet Hurt, Adairville's principal from 1994-2001, said the school grounds its teaching in research and best practices and is innovative. "They (administration and faculty) feel a sense of urgency," she said. "They really care about where these kids go, what these kids learn."

Second-year principal Paul

Sansom said having about 360 students in Pre-K-8 classes, including 115 in the middle school, gives the school an advantage.

"It's very convenient to have a group of teachers that are teaching preschool through 8th in the same building," he said. "You don't experience that level of frustration where one group of teachers were teaching one way and another group of teachers were teaching another way."

Because the school is so small and teachers meet vertically and horizontally, they don't "waste a lot of time reviewing and not knowing where kids are," Sansom said.

The school also has "looping," where teachers have the same students all three years.

"When you have students for three years, you're able to see them grow, you're able to see them make some strides academically, you're able to build a real close relationship with them," Sansom said. "When we loop, we're allowed to see much more growth than a teacher that would just have a student for one year's time."

The Schools to Watch committee was impressed with Adairville's

dedication to learning. "Failure is not an option in this school," according to its report. "Students are expected to refine assignments until proficiency is attained. Teachers are prepared to do whatever it takes for the students to be successful. There is a zero retention rate."

Students repeat assignments until they reach proficiency. "They don't get off the hook so easily," Bouldin said.

The school provides time on Fridays so that students can finish assignments and turn them in, no matter how late they are, she said.

"Giving a child a zero is robbing that child of learning," Bouldin said. "Grades are important to us, of course, but it's not the main priority. The main priority is children learning."

The school also makes the most of its time with students, Sansom said. Teachers have so many subjects and content areas to cover that students don't need to be distracted by announcements and bells signaling class changes, he said, so the school has a morning assembly each day.

"We're very intentional in trying to make sure that all of our classes have the maximum amount of time, especially in content classes that our students are tested on," Sansom said.

Hurt said teacher leadership has mitigated staff changes in the school. "If you have teachers who truly have internalized what's right for students, what's best for students and are always on the cutting edge of looking for new and better ways ... then that mitigates change in guard," she said.

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Boyd County: 'Great students, great staff, great school'

Bill Boblett, principal at Boyd County Middle School, wanted to share the credit for his school being named a 2007 School to Watch. So last spring, he assembled students, teachers and administrators to share why they had won the award.

Then something happened that reminded him of how they won it. During the assembly, he introduced his two assistant principals – his left and right hands of discipline.

"They both received a standing ovation," Boblett said. "You could tell the respect was there for what they do. Although they have a very tough job and sometimes have to be tough about what they do, the kids respect them for that."

Assistant Principal Debbie Diamond said she almost tears up thinking about the students' reaction. "They know that we love them," she said. "It makes no difference what they've done. ... They know we're firm, fair and consistent."

She said staff and administrators take a personal interest in students. "That just means so much if they know that you care about them and know that you're interested," Diamond said.

That culture was not lost on the Schools to Watch review team. "The level of respect between teachers and students is awesome," according to the recognition letter received by Boyd County Middle.

Boblett said the middle school's No. 1 focus is a positive school culture. "If there's a student achieve-

ment in this building, we celebrate it," he said.

Teachers devote extra hours to students by tutoring before and after school, mentoring a group of 12-15 students and participating in a transition camp to help incoming 6th-graders feel more comfortable about attending middle school.

Teachers are willing to spend the extra time because of the school's "culture of caring," Diamond said, and that starts with Boblett. She said he is supportive of teachers when they need personal time, and teachers help cover each other's classes.

"When you have that much support from your administration and from your co-workers, you feel more compelled to give back any amount of time that's necessary," Diamond said.

In 24 years, Diamond said she has seen several schools with good teams and technology, but the staff didn't perform well. "You can have everything under the sun, but if you don't have that kind of culture of support and focus on students and focus on learning and being encouraging, it just doesn't work," she said.

Eighth-grade mathematics teacher Linda McDowell has spent her 30-year teaching career at Boyd County Middle. She said teachers and administrators put in a lot of time collaborating to create the middle school from two junior highs in 1992.

"That set the tone from the beginning 15 years ago," she said.

McDowell said the school's team approach is what sets it apart. "Having the teams makes it a small-school environment but with the advantages of a large school, like being able to offer them more opportunities."

Sixth- and 7th-grade teams consist of a social studies, mathematics,



Photo by Amy Wallot

school's "open education" concept, classrooms for grade-level teams are often divided only by filing cabinets and bookshelves. Teachers and students get used to the situation quickly, they say.



Photo by Amy Wallot

Carol Lynn Warren, a teacher at North Oldham Middle, explains to Matt Dombroski, left, Cash Cameron and Ben Christian how to find population numbers for items using a grid.

Schools to Watch

language arts, science, reading and special education teacher. Eighth-grade teams don't have a reading teacher but add extra courses in mathematics and social studies.

Boblett is especially proud of the school's related arts program, which has nine offerings.

"Everything that they teach has to do with the state core content, what students are supposed to learn and what they're going to be assessed on," Boblett said.

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Noe: Big school's close-knit teams lead to excellence

Seven years ago, Kathleen Sayre got a wake-up call as principal at Noe Middle School (Jefferson County). She found her daughter's name on the list of students eligible for Extended School Services.

"That was sort of my turning point that made me realize that it wasn't just the statistics that were important — it was the individual kid that was important," said Sayre, Kentucky's middle school principal of the year in 2007. "It made me take a whole different perspective."

Treating students as individuals can be difficult in a school where the 6th-, 7th- and 8th-graders number 1,350 — the largest middle school in the district. Noe, built in 1974 using the British model of "open education," is essentially a two-story square doughnut — an open space in the middle divided with movable partitions and classrooms built around the outside.

That openness, coupled with the large number of students, has led the faculty to divide students into teams since the building opened. It was partly that effort that earned the school recognition as a 2007 School to Watch.

"It was amazing to the review team that such a large school could be made to feel so small and in such a seemingly effortless manner," according to Noe's award letter.

Middle school students want to feel they belong, said Gretchen Williams, instructional resource teacher and science department chair.

"Middle school is a very necessary thing for kids coming out of elementary until they make that leap to high school," she said. "If you have the right kind of middle school, it provides the environment that nurtures those students until they're ready to be more grown up. Teams do that."

Most teams contain four teachers and 120 students, except for two teams that have two teachers and 60 students. Every team has mathematics, science, social studies and language arts teachers. Teachers for the two smaller teams split the subjects. Teachers on each team have contiguous classrooms and share a common planning time.

Having smaller teams in a large school helps teachers reach individual students, Sayre said. "You don't want them to get lost in the shuffle," she said. "In the bigness you can't lose sight of the individual kid."

Mathematics teacher Theresa Reilly said team-teaching works for students. "We look for ways to make students successful," she said. "I think the team approach is awesome."

Noe is the magnet for Jefferson County's Gifted and Talented and Visual and Performing Arts

programs. It draws students from more than 80 elementary schools. About 10 percent of the students come from diverse races and cultures, Sayre said.

The school employs two English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers to work with about 85 students who speak 20 different languages. One full-time and three part-time interpreters help students who speak Spanish, several Arabic languages and MaayMaay, a Bantu language from Somalia and Kenya that is the school's most common foreign language.

Besides affirmation, the School to Watch process has helped the school focus on where it needs to improve, Sayre said. Areas of improvement are addressed in the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP), which Sayre said drives the school because of the work administrators and teachers put into creating and revising it.

As part of that, teachers know they will be held accountable for what is in the plan. "It helps keep everybody on track," Sayre said.

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North Oldham: 'Kids first' theme more than a cliché

The walls at North Oldham Middle School are covered with artwork — drawings, paintings, collages, posters and paper cutouts of horses. (They are the Mustangs, after all.)

The 770-student school employs three art teachers, and that is by design, according to Principal Robb Smith. Research is clear on how art

and music help stimulate cognitive growth, he said, but having their artwork on the walls also makes students feel more part of the school.

"We want them to own it," he said. "It's all about getting them to feel like they belong. After all, they spend more time here than at home. This should feel like home as well."

Students do feel that way, 7th-grader Molly Melia said. "Whenever you walk around our school, all of our artwork is hanging up, so it makes you feel good about yourself, and they incorporate everyone," she said.

The way the school gives all students a feeling of ownership is one reason the National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform named North Oldham Middle one of its 2007 Schools to Watch.

Besides three art teachers, the school council also has funded three counselors — one for each grade level (6th, 7th and 8th grade).

"There are a million pieces to the middle-school kid, and we try to reach those," Smith said.

Art teacher Sharron Holderfield is in her 34th, and final, year of teaching. Holderfield said teachers share strategies and work together to make students a priority while keeping a constant eye on achievement. When developing new ideas and strategies, teachers follow a simple rule:

"The first question you ask yourself is, 'Does this put kids first?' If it doesn't, you've got to throw it out," she said.

The Schools to Watch committee noted that at North Oldham Middle "all students, including exceptional children education (ECE) students, receive the same rigorous instruction and content. Whenever possible, ECE students are placed in regular education classrooms and receive supplemental assistance as needed."

Kendra Smith, a community-

based instruction teacher who works with students with moderate to severe disabilities, said her students are in regular education classrooms for social studies, mathematics, related arts, science and language arts every day. "The way that North incorporates students with special needs is that all kids are kids first, which I think is really important," she said.

North Oldham Middle students serve as mentors for their peers with functional and mental disabilities. "They are a snapshot of the acceptance here," Principal

Smith said. "If you want a picture of education, if you want to see the essence of teaching, take a look at how Kendra and the rest of the staff address the needs of these students."

North Oldham Middle reached proficiency on state assessments (100 on a 140-point scale) in 2001 and has since plateaued, according to the principal. The school's adjusted accountability index for 2007 is 103.9. Results on state assessments for ECE students at North Oldham are equivalent to those of regular education students statewide.

Jed Turner, 8th-grade counselor and special programs coordinator, said the school wants proficiency for all students, so all students are taught the same curriculum. The school has a philosophy, not a program, that "the only consistent thing that we have for all kids is high expectations," he said.

Principal Smith said he is happy North Oldham Middle is a School to Watch, but the designation is really just a means of improvement. "We are never satisfied and will do whatever it takes to make North a better place," he said. "We are continually looking for ways to improve. The day we stop that, we have let kids down."

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Educator says national board certification should be part of a teacher's learning journey

By Candace Masters-Smith, NBCT

Anderson County High School

As the plane landed at Lexington's Bluegrass Field, my mind raced with possibilities for the future as well as memories from my recent past. I had just been talking with and relating to hundreds of great teachers and professors from all over the country.



Masters-Smith

While they spoke in various regional accents and dialects, they communicated the same passions, "We are good educators; we love our students and our profession; we want and deserve to

be validated as professionals in the world." These are the mantras I heard and felt over and over again as I interacted within the sessions offered at the 2007 NBPTS National Conference and Exposition this summer in Washington, D.C.

Structured and implemented by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), this gathering of professional educators, administrators and legislators precipitated a weeklong dialogue regarding students and teachers: what they need to know and should be able to do.

This core proposition, I have come to understand, is the heart and soul of national board certification for teachers and counselors.

During the conference week, I attended numerous workshops and luncheons. I participated in meetings with senators and representatives on Capitol Hill. I soon came to the conclusion that no other content-specific professional examination of good teaching practice exists that is solely based on national standards and is reciprocal in every state; national board certification

accomplishes both.

I heard testimony after testimony from teachers and counselors from all over the country that national board certification is the best professional development on the planet. So many teachers, who have labored tirelessly in classrooms of every shape and size for years and years, gave credence to my own experience. They said they have never before felt such validation in their professional practice as they have experienced throughout the national board certification process.

I explained the national board certification process to one legislative assistant as "the bar exam for teachers." As National Board Certified Teachers, we must prove our competence with regard to student impact as well as community involvement, school leadership and collaboration.

If a candidate meets the national standards in all areas reported in the portfolio and scores well on the content assessment, then the candidate will join nearly 40 percent of the candidates nationally who accomplish national board certification during the first yearlong attempt.

Frequently, however, candidates meet national board certification status in *some*, but not in *all*, areas of their particular field of expertise. When this occurs, passing scores can be banked and – similar to certification in other professions such as law, accounting or architecture – applied in subsequent certification attempts as an advanced candidate. Candidates are allowed up to three years to complete the certification process.

National board certification is valid for 10 years, and teachers must be recertified to maintain their National Board Certified Teacher status. There is no "you certify until you die" with the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards!

If legislators, parents and teachers truly want the No Child Left Behind definition of highly qualified teachers to have some real

teeth, why not equate that terminology with National Board Certification? I can think of no better benefit for educators, schools and students than to fill their environments with National Board Certified Teachers.

I saw many monuments in Washington, D.C. I saw documents and artifacts that are indeed national treasures. Some of them made me weep with patriotic pride and sentiment.

There will never be, however, a more precious national treasure than our children and the teacher/stewards who are taking them on the journey to proficiency and

beyond. I encourage you who lead a new group of children each and every August to continue your learning journey by seeking certification through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

I drove away from the airport realizing I am exactly where I belong – among my students and my peers, discovering daily that this journey of learning is thankfully never-ending and is altogether lovely.

Candace Masters-Smith, NBCT, is a humanities teacher at Anderson County High School. She can be reached at (502) 839-5118 or candace.smith@anderson.kyschools.us.



Photo by Amy Wallot

Inspired by a master

Gracie Howard, an exiting primary student at Eastern Kentucky University's Model Lab Elementary (Madison County), is absorbed in creating her own still-life drawing of a vase of sunflowers. The vase of silk flowers on the table and a copy of Vincent van Gogh's famous painting, "Vase with 12 Sunflowers," served as inspirations for Howard and her classmates.

NBPTS certification deadline in December

By Matthew Tungate

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Teachers aspiring to be the "best of the best" have until next month to become 2007 candidates for certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). National board certification is widely regarded as a sign of quality in the teaching profession.

To be eligible to receive a \$1,250 federal subsidy, teachers must complete the NBPTS application process, including payment of the non-refundable initial fee of \$500 and the processing fee of \$65, by Dec. 1. Priority of subsidy assignment is given to national board certification candidates who teach in high-poverty, low-performing schools. Those not seeking the subsidy have until Dec. 31 to apply.

National board certification is the highest credential in the teaching profession. It is voluntary and based on a rigorous, performance-based assessment that measures what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do.

As part of the process, teachers build a portfolio that includes assignments, student work samples, videotapes and a thorough analysis of their classroom teaching. Additionally, teachers are assessed on their knowledge of the subject they teach.

The process typically takes from one to three years to complete, and not every teacher who applies is successful in gaining certification on the first try.

The 2000 General Assembly set a goal to have a National Board Certified Teacher in every Kentucky public school by 2020. The 2000 General Assembly also created a salary

incentive for teachers who achieve certification. National Board Certified Teachers earn a \$2,000 annual salary supplement for the life of the 10-year certification for each year they teach or mentor other candidates. Some local districts also provide incentives or help defray the \$2,500 assessment fee each candidate must pay for certification.

Teachers who achieve national board certification can apply for a Rank I from the Education Professional Standards Board. Rank I is the highest rank in Kentucky and allows teachers an increase in salary.

In January, the NBPTS announced that 218 Kentucky teachers earned national board certification in 2006, the largest class ever in the state, bringing the total to 1,116. According to the NBPTS, 137 of Kentucky's 174 public school districts have at least one National Board Certified Teacher.

To be eligible for national board certification, teachers must have:

- a baccalaureate degree
- three years of teaching experience in early childhood, elementary, middle or secondary schools prior to submitting an application
- a valid teaching license

MORE INFO ...

www.nbpts.org

www.kyepsb.net/certification/nationalboard.asp

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, toll free at (800) 22TEACH

2007 from Page 1

advises the Kentucky Board of Education on testing matters, recommended a statistical process to link old CATS (2000-06) to new CATS (2007). The state board agreed because it wished to keep accountability index targets in place and wanted to use state-level trends in accountability indices that have remained stable over time.

NTAPAA proposed the use of a concordance approach that would link the old and new CATS and allow Kentucky to compare two different tests from two different years. The process is similar to what occurred in 1998 when the state changed from the Kentucky Instructional Results Information System (KIRIS), the previous assessment and accountability system, to CATS.

As a result of using the concordance approach, data from the spring 2007 assessments was reported with nonadjusted and adjusted accountability index scores. (See box below.) Content-area scores, overall nonacademic indices and student scores were not adjusted.

CATS results

Overall, gains were made on the KCCT at the elementary, middle and high school levels. Using the adjusted accountability index, elementary schools increased 3 points, from 84.7 in 2006 to 87.7 in 2007. The gain at the middle school level was 2 points, from 77.0 in 2006 to 79.0 in 2007. High schools increased 2.8 points, from 75.9 in 2006 to 78.7 in 2007.

The Academic Index goal for each content

area at every grade level is 100 (proficiency) on a 140-point scale. Elementary schools scored in the 90s in reading, mathematics, science and the writing portfolio. Scores for social studies, total writing, on-demand writing, arts and humanities, and practical living/vocational studies were in the 80s.

Elementary schools reported their lowest percentage of novice learners in total writing (4.27 percent). Their highest percentage of proficient and distinguished learners was in reading (72.71 percent).

Middle schools scored in the 90s in only one content area – reading. The schools scored in the 80s in mathematics, science, social studies, total writing, the writing portfolio, arts and humanities, and practical living/vocational studies. On-demand writing scores were in the 70s.

The lowest percentage of novice learners at the middle school level was in the writing portfolio (5.36 percent). The high percentage of proficient and distinguished learners was in reading (66.31 percent).

High schools scored in the 90s in only one content area – arts and humanities. Reading and practical living/vocational studies scores were in the 80s; science, social studies and the writing portfolio scores were in the 70s; and mathematics and total writing scores were in the 60s. On-demand writing scores were in the 50s.

The lowest percentage of novice learners at the high school level was in reading (5.01 percent). The highest percentage of profi-

cient and distinguished learners was in arts and humanities (69.25 percent).

The accountability index scores for 2007 will be combined and averaged with those from assessments taken during the 2007-08 school year to determine if schools have met their unique goals toward proficiency.

NCLB results

The federal NCLB Act mandates that schools and districts receiving Title I funds be held accountable for the progress of student groups in reading and mathematics testing in grades 3-8 and at least once in each subject in high school. Student groups in Kentucky are minority students, low-income students, students with disabilities and students with limited-English proficiency.

Title I provides money to ensure that disadvantaged children receive opportunities for high-quality educational services.

Schools also are held accountable for other academic indicators – for elementary and middle schools the indicator is the prior-year CATS accountability classification; for high schools the indicator is the prior-year graduation rate.

Kentucky uses data from the administration of the KCCT to provide AYP information for its schools and districts. Use of the concordance tables for the 2007 KCCT has not affected 2007 reporting for NCLB.

Each Kentucky school and district has a specific number of NCLB goals to meet to make AYP. For individual schools in 2007, the number of goals to meet ranges from four to 22. Each grade level – elementary, middle, high and combined – has a unique Annual Measurable Objective for reading and mathematics that schools and districts must reach to achieve AYP.

In 2007, Kentucky had 904 public schools that met 100 percent of their NCLB goals for AYP. Of the 263 schools that did not make AYP, 214 made 80 percent or more of their goals.

Overall, 23 of 25 target goals were met at the state level. This is up from 19 of 25 target goals (76 percent) last year.

Of the schools not making AYP, 145 are subject to consequences outlined through NCLB. Consequences range from Tier 1 (two years of not making AYP), which requires schools to notify parents, implement school choice and write or revise a school-improvement plan, to Tier 5 (six years of not making AYP), which requires the school to put into practice the requirements of the other four tiers plus implement alternate governance consistent with state law.

Kentucky has 49 Title I schools in Tier 1 conse-

quences; 31 schools in Tier 2; 20 schools in Tier 3; 40 schools in Tier 4; one school in first-year Tier 5; and four schools in second-year Tier 5 consequences.

School districts also are held to the requirements of AYP under NCLB. Of Kentucky's 175 school districts in 2006-07, 90, or 51.4 percent, met 100 percent of their target goals. Overall, 166 districts met 80 percent or more of their goals.

The number of goals for districts to meet ranges from four to 25. Only four of the state's most diverse school districts – Boone County, Fayette County, Jefferson County and Warren County – are required to meet all 25 goals to meet AYP.

NCLB requires school districts to gauge AYP on the total student population. By using the total size of student populations and their performance, it is possible for every school within a district to make AYP without the district reaching AYP.

Kentucky has 21 Title I districts in Tier 1 consequences; 26 districts in Tier 2; 15 districts in first-year Tier 3 consequences; and 34 districts in second-year Tier 3 consequences.

Detailed information about CATS and NCLB results are posted on the Kentucky Department of Education Web site.

MORE INFO ...

www.education.ky.gov – Click on “KDE Quick-Links” in the left-hand menu and select “Kentucky Performance Report” for detailed information about individual public school and district CATS scores.

www.education.ky.gov – Click on “KDE Quick-Links” in the left-hand menu and select “NCLB Reports” for detailed information on the AYP status of individual public schools and districts.

Concordance tables statistically link 2007 CATS to previous-year CATS

The Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS) is not a static assessment and accountability program. Over the past year, CATS has undergone a number of updates and revisions due to many No Child Left Behind Act requirements. These changes, while technically sound, affected the data reported for the 2007 CATS administration.

Because of the changes – a revised core content document; a new Kentucky Core Content Test; validated student performance standards for novice, apprentice, proficient and distinguished; new tests design; and revised content-area weights – 2007 data is not directly comparable to data from years past. By using a concordance table, which is a statistical process, it is possible to link the 2007 accountability index with previous years.

This situation is similar to what occurred in 1998 when Kentucky moved from the Kentucky Instructional Results Information System (KIRIS) to CATS. At that time a different statistical link was used to move from KIRIS to CATS and keep accountability stable.

The 2006-07 “Kentucky Performance Report” for each school and district reflects transition from the old CATS (2000-06) to the new CATS (2007) by reporting two accountability index scores – adjusted by concordance and nonadjusted. Both scores provide valuable information depending on how schools and districts use them: for accountability or for planning instruction.

The adjusted accountability index continues accountability. It links the school/district's 2007 performance to the previous years' data. The score is related to the performance trends, the original goal and assistance lines in a school or district's growth chart.

The nonadjusted accountability index is calculated for 2007 using the new content-area weights and new cut scores for student performance. This index provides the current position of a school or district compared to the absolute goal of proficiency (100 on a 140-point scale) by 2014. Nonadjusted scores cannot be compared to CATS 2006 or prior years.

The concordance tables have only been applied to school or district accountability indices. Individual student scores and content-area scores have not been adjusted. School and district baselines and goals on individual growth charts remain unchanged.

Reporting for the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) also was not affected by the use of concordance tables. The Annual Measurable Objectives and Adequate Yearly Progress targets related to NCLB remain the same.

A PowerPoint presentation and other information about the concordance tables can be found on the Kentucky Department of Education's Web site at www.education.ky.gov/JumpTo/?jump=CATSConcordance.



Photo by Amy Wallot

Writing to communicate

Pam Slone, a primary teacher at Central Elementary (Johnson County), talks with student Paeyton Duncan about a classroom writing assignment. Central Elementary has consistently been among the state's top-performing schools on the Kentucky Core Content Test. The school posted an adjusted accountability index of 120.7 and 0.23 percent novice learners for 2007. The writing content academic index for the school is 108.75 for 2007.

End-of-course mathematics exams being developed

During October, students in 50 Kentucky schools participated in a field test to help with item development of a state-wide end-of-course exam for Algebra II. The Kentucky Department of Education was directed by the 2006 General Assembly to develop end-of-course exams for Algebra I, Algebra II and Geometry that would require students to demonstrate knowledge, comprehension, application and higher-order skills.

The Kentucky Department of Education staff is currently working with Achieve Inc. and a consortium of 13 other states to develop the Algebra II end-of-course exam. These and subsequent field tests are an important part of the development process.

Achieve Inc. is a nonprofit organization created by the nation's governors and business leaders to help states with standards-based education reform.

The October field test was administered to nearly 10,000 students on paper. Approximately 1,000 students took an online version of the test.

In February 2008, approximately 3,200 students will be involved in a second round of field testing using online systems. In May 2008, another 3,200 students will take the Algebra II operational test. The operational test administration and results will be analyzed for future use.



Photo by Amy Wallot

Culinary performance event

Senior Kyle Delargey, left, places almond-stuffed dates wrapped in bacon on a baking sheet after Lindsey Manker, back left, Rita Hosick, practical living teacher, Laken Johnson and Jessica Stewart assembled the appetizers in a foods class at Livingston Central High School (Livingston County). Students in the class learned how to prepare quick, healthy recipes they could serve to family and friends. The practical living/vocational studies on-demand academic index for public high schools on the 2007 Kentucky Core Content Test was 82.2, one of the top three content-area scores for high schools.

The University of Louisville Center for Research in Mathematics and Science Teacher Development is developing end-of-course exams for Algebra I and Geometry. The university already has developed diagnostic assessments to assist Kentucky teachers in determining whether high school students are mastering content in Algebra I and Geometry. The development of end-of-course exams will expand that work.

Approximately 3,200 students will take the Algebra I and Geometry tests developed by UofL in May 2008.

Kentucky classroom teachers, content specialists and postsecondary educators are involved in the development of all end-of-course mathematics exams. All exams will be based on the "Kentucky Program of Studies" and "Kentucky Core Content for Assessment 4.1."

OPPORTUNITIES from Page 1

You'll have the opportunity to find answers to those and other questions about education in Kentucky or share your own presentation at the 2008 Kentucky Teaching and Learning Conference March 6-7 in Louisville at the Kentucky International Convention Center. The conference theme, "Student Learning for the 21st Century – Every Child, Every Day," provides a showcase for excellence in teaching and learning that is occurring in schools and districts throughout the state.

The conference will focus on five areas: assessment for learning, teacher leadership, closing the achievement gap, successful school culture and technology. School- and district-level educators will present hour-and-a-half sessions and workshops about best practices, innovative strategies and unique programs that have been successful in school improvement in the schools and districts.

If you are interested in being a presenter for a session or workshop during the conference, there is still time to apply. Complete information on submitting an application is posted on the conference Web site.

Presenters receive full complimentary conference registration. If two or more educators are involved in a presentation, only the main presenter receives the registra-

tion. Educators approved for a minimum of three hours of presentation also will receive a \$50 stipend.

Registration for KTLTC before Feb. 22, 2008, is \$150 per person. That includes access to all conference activities, including sessions and workshops, featured presentations, the exhibit hall, hands-on computer labs, the Cyber Café and the opening evening reception.

There is no additional charge for workshops as in years past; however, you must register for all workshops. Availability continues to be on a first-come, first-served basis.

When five or more people from one

school/district register to attend the full conference with one payment or purchase order, the registration fee for one person is waived. This is a savings of \$150. Team registrations must be made by the Feb. 22, 2008, deadline.

More information about featured speakers, lodging, registration and the exhibit hall can be found on the Kentucky Department of Education's Web site.

MORE INFO ...

www.kentuckytlc.org

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- approved a recommendation making teachers who have been disciplined for drug use subject to no fewer than three random drug tests in the following year, with at least two of those tests within two weeks of each other.
- approved a recommendation that Highly Skilled Educators should be named by April of each year and be paid 135 percent of the local educator's district salary, but not more than the average principal pay in the highest-paying district in the state. Highly Skilled Educators are experienced teachers and principals assigned by the Kentucky Department of Education to help low-performing schools.
- met with officials from Christian County Schools to discuss the district's lack of progress in meeting No Child Left Behind and state goals. Seven of the district's 16 schools are 10 points or more away from their CATS goals despite assistance from state programs for low-performing schools. After discussing the district's plans for improvement, the board requested district officials and members of the district's Voluntary Partnership Assistance Team (VPAT) return in February 2008 to discuss the schools' progress.
- agreed to submit its 2008-10 budget request and the 2008 legislative agenda. The budget's top priorities are increases to Support Education Excellence in Kentucky (SEEK) funding program, all-day kindergarten, scholastic audits and other initiatives to help low-performing schools, gifted and talented programs, and alternative education. The department will support legislation that would allow the superintendent or a Highly Skilled Educator to replace the principal in a low-achieving school after one biennium rather than two; allow schools to give surplus computers to needy students rather than be put for public auction; increase pay to retired teachers working on scholastic audits and review teams; change the way capital funds can be used; and increase the amount of tax a school district can levy.
- heard presentations from a report by the Kentucky Youth Advocates on a study of alternative education programs; an update from the Kentucky Educational Collaborative for State Agency Children; and information about language proficiency standards for English language learners/limited-English proficiency and immigrant students.
- awarded Kathy Reed, a member of the Bardstown Independent School Board, the fourth annual Dr. Samuel Robinson Award. The award is conferred on an individual or organization in Kentucky for demonstrating outstanding commitment, service and leadership in promoting opportunities to learn at high levels for all Kentucky students. (See photo on Page 11.)

MORE INFO ...

www.education.ky.gov – Click on "KDE QuickLinks" in the left-hand menu and select "State Board of Education."

Leadership Letter

Compiled by Rebecca Blessing
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SAM pilot expands in Kentucky schools

More principals are handing off management duties to a trained classified staff person and focusing more on classroom instruction with the expansion of the SAM (School Administration Manager) pilot project in Kentucky.

The nationwide project uses an alternative school administration model in which a SAM is hired to deal with the day-to-day management duties that often consume much of a principal's time. The SAM handles tasks like bus transportation, student discipline, parent phone calls, expenditure requests and the principal's schedule. This allows the principal time to be the school's instructional leader – to observe classroom teaching, work with teachers and offer suggestions that can result in increased student achievement.

Now in its second year, the statewide Kentucky pilot has expanded to include 57 schools (30 in Jefferson County and 27 others across the state). The pilot project began with SAMs only at the elementary level. This school year, SAMs also are being used in six middle and six high schools in the state.



School Administration Manager Tim McMurtry talks with Edmonton Elementary Principal Jamie Howard about her schedule for the coming week. McMurtry handles the principal's schedule and takes care of the day-to-day administrative and management tasks so that Howard can spend more time in the classroom working with teachers to improve teaching and learning at Edmonton Elementary (Metcalfe County).

Data from the first year of the project showed that after SAMs took over management duties, principals spent up to 80 percent of their time on instruction. Before SAMs were in the schools, some principals spent as little as 20 percent of their time on instructional issues.

However, the project also is about the quality of time spent. "We want principals to know how to be effective instructional leaders," says statewide project coordinator Debbie Daniels.

A Wallace Foundation grant provides for site visits and extensive training for both the SAM and the principal to equip them to succeed in their new roles. Each local school district funds the cost of the SAM position.

"The expansion of the program speaks to the program's success," says Daniels. "Superintendents and central offices are realizing the impact that the program is having on how the principals spend their time and the impact that instructional leadership can have on student achievement."

Daniels says several instructional and time-management tools are being developed out of the SAM project. She says those tools ultimately will be shared with leaders in all Kentucky public schools.

Kentucky continues to take a leadership role in the national SAMs pilot project. More Kentucky schools are involved in the pilot than schools in any other state. Outside of Kentucky, some 60 elementary, middle and high schools from seven other states also are piloting the SAMs model.

Parents Advisory Council makes recommendations

The Commissioner's Parents Advisory Council (CPAC), a group formed to advise the state commissioner of education on policy issues, has issued a set of recommendations to improve family and community involvement in Kentucky's public schools.

In January 2007, CPAC developed a document called the "Kentucky Family and Community Involvement Guide to Student Achievement." The guide outlined six objectives to help parents and other adults support student achievement:

- Relationship Building: School staff builds productive, personal relationships with students' parents.

- Submit a written request that includes your name, old address, new address, Social Security number and your signature.

Mail the form or your written request to: Kentucky Teachers' Retirement System
ATTN: Tammy Brown
479 Versailles Rd.
Frankfort, KY 40601

If you are not a current teacher or administrator, e-mail your change of address to kyteacher@education.ky.gov or by mail to:

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500 Mero St.
Frankfort, KY 40601

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If you don't want to miss an issue of *Kentucky Teacher*, please take a few moments to learn how to let us know when your address changes.

Kentucky Teacher receives mailing addresses for all active Kentucky certified classroom teachers and administrators from the Kentucky Teachers' Retirement System. If you are a certified employee of a Kentucky public school, you can change your mailing information in one of two ways:

- Complete a change of address form that can be downloaded from the retirement system's Web site at http://ktrs.ky.gov/01_active_members/B_change_name.htm.



Photos by Amy Wallot

Award winner in education

Kathy Reed, left, a member of the Bardstown Independent School Board, holds a plaque she received after being named the recipient of the fourth annual Dr. Samuel Robinson Award by the Kentucky Board of Education at its October meeting. Reed has been on the local school board since 1991, been chair of the board three times, taught middle school and been a regional administrator for the state Cabinet for Families and Children. Joining Reed for the presentation are Rosetta Dodson, head of Concerned Parents of Bardstown; Margie Bradford, vice chair of the Bardstown Independent School Board; Tom Hamilton, associate superintendent of Bardstown Independent Schools; and Samuel Robinson, former state board member for whom the award is named, and his wife, Hugh Ella Robinson. The award is given each year to an individual or organization that demonstrates outstanding commitment, service and leadership to public education in Kentucky.

- Communications: Two-way information flows regularly between school staff and parents about students' academic achievement and individual needs.
- Decision Making: School staff encourages, supports and expects parents to be involved in school improvement monitoring and decisions.
- Advocacy: School staff identifies and supports a parent or other adult who takes personal responsibility for a child's learning needs.
- Learning Opportunities: School staff ensures that families have opportunities to support children's learning.
- Community Partnerships: School staff partners with community members to improve student achievement.

CPAC recommends that the Kentucky Department of Education take four major actions to implement these objectives:

- Set high expectations, measure performance and report progress, using the council's guide to student achievement as an audit tool.
- Help schools improve relationship building and communications by adopting "customer satisfaction" training modules for school districts, making involvement data available publicly and establishing community involvement advisory councils at school, district and state levels.
- Provide resources and support through recognition of local achievement, research materials and training.
- Build capacity through professional development for parents, teachers, school

officials and the community.

The council's goal is for Kentucky to become the first state in the nation to set a standard for family and community involvement that is focused on student achievement. The full report is available on the department's Web site, www.education.ky.gov. Click on "Parents and Families" in the left-hand menu and select "The Missing Piece of the Proficiency Puzzle."

Principal for a Day

It's not too early to be thinking about who you're going to invite to be "Principal for a Day" at your school on Jan. 29, 2008.

Each year, the Kentucky Association of Elementary School Principals sponsors the program. It is an opportunity to invite community leaders, legislators and community members to serve as the honorary principal at your school for one day.

Resources for planning "Principal for a Day" are available on the principal association's Web site, www.kaesp.org.

Call for presenters

The Kentucky School Boards Association (KSBA) is seeking presenters for its annual conference Feb. 22-24, 2008, in Louisville. Conference organizers are looking for people to lead 75-minute sessions as well as three-hour interactive, skill-building sessions.

Proposal guidelines, selection criteria and submission forms are available on the KSBA Web site, www.ksba.org. The deadline for submissions is Dec. 1.

Campbellsville STLP benefits entire district

By Rebecca Blessing

rebecca.blessing@education.ky.gov

Do you fear venturing beyond the basics on your computer? Do you panic when the printer needs paper or ink or stops working entirely? Do you shy away from using technology in your classroom because you don't know how to set it up or won't know what to do if something goes wrong?

Those are questions that don't concern the teaching staff in the Campbellsville Independent School District. Those educators see technology in a different light, thanks in large part to the district's Student Technology Leadership Program (STLP), now in its 15th year. STLP is a project-based learning program that empowers students to use technology to learn and achieve.

"Our district has made the use of technology one of its goals," says Superintendent Diane Woods-Ayers. "Our STLP is the backbone of many technology initiatives that we have been able to accomplish in the district. These students take the technology skills they learn and apply them to the needs that we have in the district."

Starting out in STLP

Students can participate in STLP as early as the 4th grade at Campbellsville Elementary School.

Library Media Specialist Susie Crowder introduces the STLP members to a lot of different tech-

nology experiences. Last year, for instance, students learned to set Internet browser bookmarks, took digital pictures and video of school events, and set up and ran sound equipment for school assemblies.

Students say their favorite activity was developing color- and number-learning games for early primary students to play on the school's SMART Boards. "The kids love the idea that they are helping the younger students," said Crowder, "and the SMART Board technology is a lot of fun for them."

Acquiring new skills

As they move into middle school, STLP members learn more complicated technology tasks, like performing software updates and installing anti-virus programs on school computers.

STLP adviser Terry Brewer says many middle school students become proficient on computer applications. She says many of her STLP members develop advanced skills in Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint programs that they use on their own classroom projects.

In addition, STLP members often are called upon to troubleshoot technology problems that crop up in class. "Teachers know who the STLP students are and know they can turn to them for help," Brewer says.

Applying what they learn

At Campbellsville High School, more students take an interest in technology and STLP.

"All kinds of kids participate in STLP," explains Brewer, the STLP adviser. "We have as many females as males, all the minorities are represented, honor roll students, special needs students and under-achievers. They are drawn to the program because they know they get to apply what they learn."

Students can choose from a variety of information technology classes at the high school.

A Computer Support Essentials class helps prepare students to solve technology problems throughout the district. "Each year they handle hundreds of e-mail, phone and help desk requests," says Brewer. "The students are given training and then trusted to complete the job."

High school students also can take classes in Web design, multimedia, help desk and advanced computer applications.

"Since students are in charge of hardware and software support, the entire district's Web pages, a district TV program, a video yearbook, multiple event programs, brochures, audio set-up in the auditorium and various other technology projects, the students have a variety of work opportunities in which to apply a variety of skills and the knowledge they acquire," Brewer says.

In addition to supporting district technology needs, STLP members also have produced sev-



Shelby Netherland demonstrates a SMART Board game to Patrick Howell that STLP members at Campbellsville Elementary School designed to help early primary students learn numbers.

eral projects for the community, including a neighborhood directory and membership book for the local Rotary Club.

Affecting the whole district

District Technology Coordinator Virgil Parker says STLP has a big impact on the Campbellsville Independent School District.

"If you look at it just from a cost savings, it's huge," Parker says. "At minimum wage, the students would be saving the district more than \$20,000 a year. But if you figure it at \$50 to \$75 per hour, which is the going rate for technology help, the students save the district a minimum of a couple hundred-thousand dollars every year."

In addition, he says STLP supports instruction throughout the district. "Because teachers have the support, they're more apt to use technol-

ogy in the classroom. And when they do, it's more engaging for the students," he added.

District personnel are quick to point out another benefit of the program: students are getting valuable experience.

Junior Abi Parker couldn't agree more. Though she doesn't plan a career in technology, she says the experience will help her in just about any job.

"I think technology is expanding and everything you do, you're going to need technology," she said. "So STLP just kind of prepares you for life."

MORE INFO ...

Terry Brewer, STLP advisor, Campbellsville Independent Schools, (270) 465-8774, Ext. 309, terry.brewer@cville.kyschools.us

Elaine Harrison, Kentucky STLP coordinator, (502) 564-2020, Ext. 236, elaine.harrison@education.ky.gov



Photos by Rebecca Blessing

STLP Adviser Terry Brewer answers a question for Matthew Christie, front, as he and other STLP members Hailey Petrey, Tracey Smothers, Ahmed El-Amouri and Aaron Parker create desktop shortcuts on computers in the Campbellsville Middle School lab.



Kinana Smith, left, Ashyia Robinson and Summer Montgomery choose music and edit video for the Campbellsville High School video yearbook, just one of many projects produced each year by high school STLP members.